THE CHURCHES' FELLOWSHIP FOR PSYCHICAL STUDY

QUARTERLY REVIEW

DECEMBER, 1959 ONE SHILLING No. 22

The Churches' Fellowship for Psychical Study

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CHURCHES' FELLOWSHIP FOR PSYCHICAL STUDY QUARTERLY REVIEW

Editor - - REGINALD M. LESTER

DECEMBER, 1959 No. 22

EDITORIAL COMMENT

THE full story of the B.B.C. tactics with the Churches' Fellowship are told on another page, as it is felt that every member should be made aware of the true facts. No further comment is needed here, except to add that the reaction has been just the opposite to that which the B.B.C. obviously expected.

We understand the B.B.C. has been inundated with letters of protest, and everyone has rallied to the Fellowship's support with a new determination. This support has come not only from our own members, but from outsiders as well, who are consumed with indignation at what they term "a real raw deal". When the Englishman's sense of fair play is violated, the reaction is truly tremendous, and out of this television shambles a new vigour and wider activity will undoubtedly arise. As several of our own clergy have remarked: "This incident has filled us with a militancy in propagating our mission such as we may never have had before".

Since the Panorama programme, and following on his letter about our true work in *The Methodist Recorder*, the Rev. Bertram Woods has been receiving almost daily enquiries regarding membership.

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One of the most heartening aspects of the past quarter has been the outstanding success of our Annual Conferences, as reported on another page. The remarkable regional Conference at Mamhead Park raises an important issue; the value of more regional Conferences of this nature in different parts of the country, where our scattered members in isolated country districts have the opportunity of getting together to hear first class lectures and discussions and enjoying social activities and personal fellowship with others. They are also a useful recruiting medium among the churches, from where our audiences are gathered.

Furthermore, they need not be a financial loss, but if properly organised like Mamhead Park can result in a net profit.

We hope next year to hold one in the Midlands.

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The long-term research work of some of our Study Groups is proving of great value, and this is particularly the case in Leeds, where there are 10 groups under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. John Macdonald. They are doing most meticulous research in the direction of healing, psychical phenomena, philosophy, telepathy, psychometry, and other fields of study allied to our work.

Some of our newly formed Study Groups will be greatly aided by the syllabus which is being prepared by the Council, under the direction of the Rev. Bertram Woods, which will give them a definite line of guidance without laying down any rigid programme.

THE BISHOP OF CHELMSFORD

The Bishop of Chelmsford has accepted hon. vice-presidency of the Fellowship, which now has thirteen bishops supporting it.

ANNUAL AT HOME

A very happy evening was enjoyed by a large gathering of members and friends at Caxton Hall on October 16th, which was attended by our President, Sir Cyril Atkinson and Lady Atkinson.

A short report on the current year's progress in the Fellowship was given by Col. Lester, and the Rev. Bertram Woods spoke on the general work—and particularly the healing side of it. Another interesting short talk was given by Mr. Joseph Blewitt, and Mrs. Lester read out a letter from one of our blind members, to accentuate the "fellowship" side of our activities.

The evening ended with several of the Council going on to the platform to be questioned on various aspects of our work by members from the hall—always a useful and often constructive procedure.

NEW BRISTOL BRANCH

As we go to Press, a public meeting is being held in Bristol to form a new Group in that city. It has been organised by Mr. E. N. Brailsford, one of our active Bristol members, who circulated over 200 clergy and ministers in the area. An address on the Fellowship's work and aims is being given by Col. Lester, and the development of the Fellowship in the West Country will be dealt with in an address by the Rev. Edward King. Mrs. Lester will be answering questions about the Healing work.

B.B.C. REVEALS ITS REAL POLICY

PANORAMA TACTICS EXPOSED

By The Editor

It has always been contended that the B.B.C.'s policy is to discredit any form of psychical research. Nevertheless, when the Corporation approached the Fellowship last June, and I met certain of the producers in conference at their Lime Grove studios, I was given an assurance that such policy did not extend to psychical study within the Christian churches.

On that understanding, and with further assurances that they would present our work in a fair, impartial and well-balanced manner, the Council authorised me to proceed with the drawing-up of a programme for "Panorama". A considerable amount of careful planning was necessary, with references back to the Council and with two specially convened meetings of the Healing Central Advisory Committee, to consider and approve the general framework and the people to be interviewed.

The proposed pictures to be shot included one of the Council in session at Caxton Hall; one of the Healing Committee in session discussing the replies to the questionnaire; one of an experienced study group in discussion; one of a healing service in a church; one of a brief demonstration showing one of the many healing techniques we were investigating; and if possible one of our Annual Conference.

This outline was approved in principle by the B.B.C. and then drawn up in more detail. As regards interviews they stipulated they must have one with myself as founder, and others arranged to be interviewed included the Rev. Bertram Woods, in his dual capacity of hon. secretary of the Fellowship and as Chairman of the Healing Committee; the Rev. J. D. Pearce-Higgins, as Chairman of the Research Committee; Dr. Griffith Evans, to represent the medical link-up in our work; Miss Frances Banks, to speak on her research questionnaires; the Rev. Alan Barham's film of Miss Rosher's writing and Mr. Hilliger's findings, and if possible Miss White and her staff at work at the Worthing office. The Bishop of Southwark was chosen to speak for our vice-presidents.

After a great deal of further negotiation, the B.B.C. were in touch with me finally in October, to say that the further proposal to film the Annual Conference at the Froebel Institute, or at Mamhead Park, had been knocked on the head by the arrival of the General Election, and the programme would have to be deferred. But it was provisionally arranged that the week after the Election, when their cameras would be free again, they would try to arrange to take shots of the Council in session on October 16th. A 'phone talk with me that Monday resulted in a promise to get in touch with me about such arrangements before that date, but nothing transpired and I returned to Torquay, it then being assumed the programme would again be deferred to a later date. Then, out of the blue, about a week later came a phone call from the B.B.C. to my Torquay home to say that the programme had all been fixed up for ten days ahead, and they were sending down to take my interview, in a few days.

I protested at this apparently last minute rush, after four months of such careful planning, which seemed about to be thrown overboard, and suggested that it should be deferred until the full original plans could be carried out. The reply was that it was now all scheduled, and the proposed interviews were being laid on. (It subsequently transpired that the only people on the original list of interviewees who had been approached were Dr. Griffith Evans and Miss Rosher, and only the latter was actually interviewed). Even on the day they interviewed me, I was informed that the interviews *had been arranged* with the Bishop of Southwark and the Rev. Bertram Woods. It now turns out that the latter had not been approached at all, and the Bishop was not asked until the Friday, when it was too late.

At this eleventh hour, the Dean of St. Paul's kindly agreed to take the Bishop of Southwark's place, but was then manoeuvred into an impossible position, by being presented with a viewing of the film as cut and without being informed of the cuts that had taken place. He was naturally as appalled as we all were when he saw such a presentation!

Did the B.B.C. deliberately throw overboard all the planned schedule, which would have shown the Fellowship's work in too favourable a light? Subsequent developments suggest this was indeed the case, and that the last minute rush was for the sole purpose of giving a "debunking" presentation. There seems no other conclusion.

A more blatant procedure, however, was the way in which the interview was operated. A team of ten B.B.C. men with their arc lights and massive paraphernalia descended on my house at 11 a.m. and for the next twelve hours proceeded to turn it upside down. At the end of the day the producer

apologised to my wife for all the chaos, to which her reply was; " I do not mind that, so long as you present our case fairly ". Protestations to this effect were forthcoming all day, and Mr. Robert Kee, the interviewer, told me he was most interested and impressed with our work, and went out of his way to create the impression of a most sympathetic attitude.

Then came the further debacle. It was agreed that a study group be taken in session. As this was obviously a good angle from the Fellowship study viewpoint, seven members of the Torbay Group cancelled all their engagements that day and under the chairmanship of the Rev. Edward King stood by from 3 p.m. until they came on for filming at about 10 p.m. This was quite a highlight; Mr. King led a first class discussion on the spiritual aspect of our work, linking it up with a study of the Resurrection, and every member of the Group was excellent. After the seven minutes of filming, Mr. Kee was most enthusiastic and made the remark: " If everyone was as good as this, I'd soon be out of a job! " Evidently it was *too* good a presentation of our work, as it was cut right out of the programme.

The fifty per cent of cuts of my own interview were equally significant. Whole sentences were cut, which in some cases had the effect of giving a different interpretation to my replies. My emphasis on the word *study*, my statements about the study groups and our doctors on the Healing Committee, the way in which we related psychical experiences to Scriptural teachings and many other aspects of the more serious and spiritual side of our work were carefully cut out.

The most outrageous cut, however, was in respect of the " healing demonstration". Here I emphasised this was a demonstration, put on at their request, of one of the many techniques of healing that we were investigating, and that it was not a healing in actual practice by the Fellowship, as most of ours was absent healing, or healing through prayer. They promised faithfully to include this commentary, as the demonstration was put on *after* my interview (although shown *before* on the film), and I was thus precluded from commenting on it. After their promise to make this commentary, they did the exact reverse, and stated it was a healing " in a Churches' Fellowship sanctuary! " I had already informed them the Fellowship has no official healing sanctuaries, but that regular healing services were held in some areas in our churches.

Was this the reason why the B.B.C. advised a film being made instead of live interviews, so that in a film they would be able to cut all the most favourable and impressive side of our work? I leave that question without comment!

The week following " Panorama " an Emergency Council Meeting was held at Caxton Hall, London, and the following letter sent to Sir Ian Jacob, Director-General of the B.B.C.:

" SIR,—An Emergency Meeting of this Council of The Churches' Fellowship For Psychical Study convened today has considered the implications involved in the presentation of the Fellowship's work in the B.B.C. Panorama programme of November 2nd last.

" The Council wishes to register the strongest protest against the biased and tendentious account of the Fellowship's investigations which was offered to viewers. In particular the Council regrets that no attempt was made to show the serious and spiritual side of the Fellowship's studies. The presentation was in no sense objective and appeared to have as its purpose the highlighting of certain of the more sensational phenomena which form only a small part of the Fellowship's enquiries.

" The Council can come to no other conclusion than that this was a deliberate attempt to cause misunderstanding and confusion in the minds of those watching the programme.

" The Council requests a full enquiry into the presentation and is preparing a detailed statement of all the points of complaint. The Council feels sure that you will be only too anxious to accord us this enquiry, in view of the reputation for impartiality which your Corporation has always claimed to maintain.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) REGINALD M. LESTER,
Chairman of Council."

As we go to Press, a reply has just been received from Sir Ian Jacob, promising to make a careful examination of our detailed points of complaint.

The Council's letter was immediately released to the Press, and the facts were then published, through the Press Association, in no less than 54 daily newspapers (nine London and 45 provincial), ranging from Dundee to Plymouth, and across the Irish Sea to Belfast.

BISHOP OF TEWKESBURY AT FELLOWSHIP MEETING

The Bishop of Tewkesbury was on the platform at a public meeting of the Fellowship organised by the Cheltenham Group, when the address was given by the well-known " sensitive ", Mrs. Nan Mckenzie. The Bishop gave a charming vote of thanks at the end of the meeting, which was under the chairmanship of Major-General Pakenham-Walsh.

INSPIRING MEMORIAL SERVICE AT ST. MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS

THE Memorial Service at St. Martin-in-the-Fields to the Rev. Maurice Elliott was notable for its air of cheerfulness and assurance, and was indeed inspiring to everyone present. A large congregation attended, with representatives from many other bodies outside the Fellowship, and as one looked down the well-filled church one was struck by the bright colours of the dresses and the complete absence of any sombre note.

The Service was very beautifully conducted by the Rev. Bertram Woods, and it opened by a recital from the pulpit by the Rev. Dr. Leslie Newman of those most appropriate verses of William Wordsworth from " The Happy Warrior ". Prayers were delivered by Mr. Woods, following the opening hymn: " Immortal, Invisible, God only Wise ", and the address was given by Col. Lester, who said that we had all come that day to pay tribute to a much-loved friend and one who through the years had given so much help and comfort to countless people. " I think ", said Col. Lester, " we can all visualise the great welcome Maurice would have received when he reached the Other Side, and I am sure the first words that would have greeted him were: ' Well done, thou good and faithful servant! ' We know he is here with us at this service this morning, rejoicing—and I am sure deeply touched—by the gathering that has assembled to pay their tribute of love and affection to him.

" We know that in the not so distant future we shall again hear the voice we loved, again feel the hand we grasped.

" Maurice is *not* lost to us; he is *not* lost to the Churches' Fellowship. We know that he is as vitally alive as when he was here with us—even more so now. He has done a tremendous amount for us while on earth; we are convinced he will now be working for us on an even greater scale from the Other Side.

" We all feel it has been a great privilege to have had Maurice as friend and colleague—a man of a kindly and gentle nature, and yet a stern fighter in the cause of truth.

" We know the many slings and arrows inflicted on him during those 50 years when he has been speaking and writing on the place of psychical study within the Christian churches. Yet never, at any time, was there any rancour or bitterness in his outlook.

" We rejoice that within his lifetime here he was able to see fruition of his hopes in establishment of such an influential body within the Christian churches as the Churches' Fellowship for Psychical Study.

" We must never forget that Maurice always stressed the importance of bringing in to the Christian churches what he termed ' whole ' Christianity, and not the whittled-down type of Christianity. I remember his declaring on many occasions:

" ' I hope this Fellowship can bring back into the Church the full, real, complete Christ of the New Testament.'

" He believed—as I am sure all of us here do—in an active realistic Church that is prepared to put into effect the true meaning of The Communion of Saints."

Col. Lester concluded by saying: " Let us end this inspiring Service—and I'm sure it *has* been inspiring—on the same note of confidence, assurance and cheerfulness that I have no doubt has been giving such joy to Maurice this morning.

" But let us combine that note of joy with one of thankfulness; thankfulness that we have had the privilege of knowing and claiming the friendship of such a man. And with the knowledge that what he has sown by his courage and vision, others will in time reap abundantly.

" Truly he can say with St. Paul:

" ' I have fought a good fight,
I have finished my course,
I have kept the faith.' "

The hymn " For those we love within the veil " was then sung, followed by closing prayers.

It is a wonderful thought at such a Memorial Service to realise there is no room for sorrow, but rather that a dear friend has been released from his sick and worn out body to continue his life in a greater sphere of activity.

How different is a Memorial Service to those who pass out of their body not knowing what awaits them, leaving sorrowing relatives and friends behind. They have no such picture and their hearts are weighed down with the grief of the physical loss and the uncertainty of what has befallen the loved one. Some will say " They are in the hands of God ", but how many these days have sufficient faith to make this a living reality. Assurance such as some of the members of the Fellowship have is one of the great benefits bestowed on those who take the trouble to study psychical research.

LEGACIES

Most societies derive a considerable proportion of their income from legacies, and we would remind those of our members who may feel that they would like to continue to help the Fellowship after they pass on to the next life, that they can do this in a practical way by including a clause in their Wills to bequeath an amount according to their means.

THE REV. MAURICE ELLIOTT

EVIDENCE has been forthcoming that Maurice Elliott has already succeeded in making himself conscious to several members of the Fellowship through various sources.

He has given indication that he is actively working for the Fellowship again in his new life, in co-operation with Sir Oliver Lodge, Conan Doyle and R. J. Campbell. He has repeated that the whole project of the C.F.P.S. was founded on their side before it reached us here, and he has already been brought into contact with many souls who were famous on earth who are linked with our Fellowship and who are working to assert the force of their spiritual power in order to bring about a tremendous growth of our movement on the earth. They are able to see it as a nucleus of a tremendous future that will bring great knowledge to the world later on.

Maurice has been able to get over an interesting comment on his passing, which he described as like " shedding an old surplice and taking on a wonderful new one." His passing was so easy because he had learned how to let go of his physical body; this made a great difference as there was no straining effort to hold on to the physical. This shows the importance of our bringing to people such knowledge before their time for passing over comes.

In making himself known to one of our Council members, Maurice emphasised the need to show people that the rightness of communication is based on the Master, Christ Himself, who returned to His disciples and communicated with them. But without the power of Christ, work can never be of the highest quality.

These messages came through telepathically, by automatic writing, by direct voice, and by other methods.

TORBAY BRAINS TRUST

There was a large attendance in the ballroom of the Palace Hotel at a public Brains Trust held by the Torbay Group. The Question Master was Major D. B. Stevens, and the panel comprised Dr. Strange (from Starcross Hospital), Mrs. Hughenden Baines, the Rev. Anthony Rouse and Lt. Col. R. M. Lester. A number of extremely interesting questions were asked during the hour-and-a-half allotted to them, and were ably and constructively answered by the team. There were a large number of non-members in the audience, and the propaganda value of the Fellowship's work was evident.

LONDON ANNUAL CONFERENCE

By THE REV. J. D. PEARCE-HIGGINS

THE fourth annual conference was held again this year in the delightful setting of the Froebel Institute at Roehampton, and was attended by some 120 people including 80 residents.

The theme of the Conference was The Easter Enigma, and the title was prompted by the reading of a recent book by The Rev. Michael Perry which had tried to interpret the Resurrection narratives in the light of the late Dr. Tyrrell's theory of Apparitions as telepathic hallucinations. Since this theory could not adequately account for the more material manifestations recorded in the gospel accounts, it seemed good to consider especially the problem of materialisations and the evidence for them in modern times.

In my opening paper, I outlined briefly the scope of the Conference and asked a few questions which I hoped would be answered in subsequent papers.

This was followed by a fascinating session led by Mr. Norman Hunt, when he gave us long extracts from his tape recordings of sittings with a trance " sensitive " the most remarkable features of which were the astonishing changes in character and accent " foreign, cockney, scots and ' refained ' ", which the different communicators used.

On the Tuesday, we settled down to some hard thinking, first listening enthralled to Dr. Shepherd's brilliant outline of Rudolf Steiner's views on the nature of the Resurrection, in which we learnt that this great visionary did not think that materialisations as we know them had any part, and also we heard something of the great cosmic sweep of Steiner's thought. This was followed by Mr. Percy Wilson with his life-long experience of psychic phenomena, who gave us many modern instances of materialisations and also told of the stringent physical and spiritual precautions which he always insisted on.

In the afternoon our new Secretary introduced himself to the members and gave a short but brilliant account of the state of spiritual healing in Britain and America today.

After tea we listened to Dr. Dingwall, another very old hand at the game who endeavoured to discount practically all the evidence for materialisations as being due to fraud, or to hallucination of the participators, and he was able to show us one photograph of the unmasking of a confederate in the act of materialising. Since, however, Dr. Dingwall admitted that there were certain phenomena for which a materialistic explanation could not be found, most of us felt that while his talk was a most salutary warning against fraud and gullibility, he did not altogether make out his case for the fraudulent nature of all these manifestations!

All the more so when in the evening Mr. Harry Edwards took a holiday from healing, and came with his remarkable slides of the materialisations of the late Jack Webber and showed us some pictures of ectoplasm, as well as pictures of the levitation of objects. The infra-red camera we felt did not lie, but the ectoplasmic methods of materialisation did not appear to most of us to have much light to shed upon the nature of the Biblical occurrences. It was however a most valuable and instructive lecture.

Our last paper and the discusssion after it were conducted by Dr. Mona Rolfe on the subject of the etheric body, and she discussed this at length and answered many questions which had been puzzling many of us. Her own fascinating life story, her high medical and psychological qualifications and her great understanding of human nature and of psychic phenomena lent great weight to her opinions.

I think that the conclusion that most of us reached was that the physical phenomena of the Resurrection were certainly not materialisations of the sort normally produced in the séance room, but taken in conjunction with Steiner's opinion, we were led to feel that our Lord perhaps manifested in an etheric body which in a unique way he was able to make more than ordinarily visible to the circle of his friends who were more than ordinarily advanced in spiritual and psychic powers of perception.

The bound copies of the above lectures are now available from our Worthing office, price 7/9 including postage. This year they are twice as large as last year's.

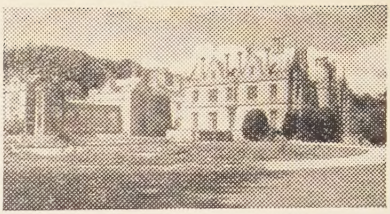
TAPE RECORDINGS

In response to general demand we have had copies made of the tape recordings given at the London and S.W. Counties Conferences this year. These proved so attractive that members asked if they could be loaned to those who were not present. They are excellent for Study Groups and friendly gatherings, and can be obtained on loan from our Worthing office. We are having to make a charge of 5/- for this facility which will include postage from our Office, because they were expensive to reproduce.

WEST COUNTRY ANNUAL DINNER

In view of the great success of last year's Annual Dinner at Torquay, a similar event has been fixed at Palm Court Hotel for Friday, May 6th by the Torbay Group. It is hoped that many of those who attended the Mamhead Park Conference will come along to this enjoyable social evening.

Tickets will be one guinea each, as before, and it will not be evening dress, as many members will have long distances to travel. Names of the principal guests will be announced later.



MAMHEAD PARK

MAMHEAD PARK BREAKS RECORDS

ATTENDANCE records for a Regional Conference were broken by the South-western Counties Conference at Mamhead Park, Devon, on October 6th and 7th, and did not fall far short of the total numbers at the London Annual Conference. At all sessions the largest lecture room was filled to capacity.

Members and non-members have since kept referring to it as " that wonderful Conference ", and other frequent adjectives justifiably applied were " uplifting " and " inspiring ". Certainly all the lectures—and also the periods of discussion —reached an exceptionally high level.

Members came from towns and scattered villages all over Devon, Cornwall, Dorset and Somerset, and there was a good attendance of local clergy. Apologies for absence were received from the Bishop of Exeter (who was away on a lecture tour in the U.S.A. at that date), and from the Dean of Exeter, who had a prior meeting that prevented him from opening the Conference.

All the organising arrangements were in the hands of Captain A. E. Hart, the Area Organiser, and the speakers were obtained by Mrs. Kew Mills. The Conference was presided over by Col. Lester. Fellowship clergy who officiated at the Conference included the Rev. W. Salmon, rector of Poltimore, Exeter; the Rev. S. Bassett Pyke, of Budleigh Salterton; the Rev. Edward King, of Torquay; the Rev. C. Grimes of Newton Ferrers; and the Rev. L. Klebs, of Bristol.

At the opening session the address was given by Mr. John Benians, principal of a Rudolf Steiner School, who took as his subject: " The Understanding of Man ". This proved to be a very fine lecture, and produced an extremely good and thoughtful discussion to follow. At the afternoon session the speaker was Mr. Eric Harrison, president of the Devon and Cornwall Healers' Association. On this occasion, his subject was " Reincarnation ". He gave an excellent and impartially presented analysis of this controversial theory

and handled his questioners admirably in the hour-long discussion that followed. It was interesting to note that both our clergy and lay members seemed equally divided in their views.

After the day's serious thoughts and discussions, the gathering relaxed in the evening to a remarkable extent at the first Social to be held at any of our Conferences. The evening, in fact, became almost hilarious, and was due to the versatility of our Master of Ceremonies, the Rev. Bertram Woods, who showed himself to us in yet another light—and a very delightful one, too!

The first session of the second day was given up to Mr. Woods, who presented to the Conference an up-to-date review on " The Present Position of Spiritual Healing ". This was again followed by a prolonged and interesting discussion, which still continued for a further half-hour after Mr. Woods had left to catch his train back to London.

The closing session of the Conference carried on the remarkably high level of lectures, when Major Tudor Pole, founder of the Big Ben Silent Minute of prayer, gave a most arresting address on some of his own outstanding experiences, and also spoke of some of the dangers of psychic experimentation.

Major Price, the Bursar of Mamhead Park, went to great trouble in attending to the comfort of all our resident members, and he also was present at each of the sessions. The Padre of the centre led the Conference in evening prayers at the end of the day's sessions.

In closing the Conference on Wednesday evening, Col. Lester said how encouraging it had been to hear on all sides such enthusiasm about the success of this first Conference in the West Country, which had far surpassed the attendance at any of our other regional gatherings of this kind. The only regrets he had heard were that it had come to an end, and already members were talking about making it a three-days' Conference next year.

The West Country newspapers gave good reports of the Conference, as a result of which a number of new enquiries for membership were received.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

May we remind members that our new and attractive Christmas card in red and black is now obtainable from the Worthing office, price 4d. including envelope. There is also a limited number of last year's card at the reduced price of 3d. each; as these are not dated they are suitable for the current year. Both cards are extremely good value.

SECRETARY'S CAUSERIE

Our *Review* Editor is allowing me a column in each number under the general title of " Secretary's Causerie ". By this means I hope to make contact with our members and readers, so that they may get to know me at any rate in print, and I may get to know them—perhaps by correspondence.

I shall " speak my mind " here and perhaps be purposely provocative sometimes, because it is good that there should be in our movement a lively exchange of ideas. This is one evidence, I am sure, of vitality.

We stand for " the encouragement of the study and investigation of psychical phenomena . . . within the Christian Church ". (I quote from the Constitution.) This means that we want to interest members of the Church to which we belong to these matters, because we believe that they have a relevance to the Christian Message and Faith, and can be a " Means of Grace " to the Christian Life. This places upon those of us who are " mature in knowledge " in these things a special responsibility. We must exercise patience and restraint with those who are children in these things, and timid and uncertain in their approach to them.

In our Groups for instance the mature must be prepared to move at the pace of the children, and not to hurry them along lest they take fright. We must lead them gently into the knowledge we have, in all love, as becomes Christians.

I have had the pleasure of meeting some of our Groups already . . . in the South West, the Isle of Wight, Rugby and Coventry. I look forward to visiting others during the coming winter. I have discovered a great enthusiasm among the members, and I feel sure that backed by Prayer, it will communicate itself to others in the churches to which we belong. In order to stimulate growth both in Group attendances and in membership of the Fellowship it is a good thing to have occasional " Bring One " Group meetings . . . when each member brings as a guest an interested friend from the church. The meeting, of course, needs to be arranged for the guests and any treatment of the subject dealt with should be at the elementary level. Two or three of these meetings carefully arranged each session ought to bring in new members steadily.

We are preparing a Syllabus for a three-years Course of Studies in Psychics. This will be especially for groups that feel they need some guidance in their studies. We hope to develop the idea for individual members, so that those who have no group which they can attend can still follow a course of useful study. The Syllabus will, we hope,

(*continued next page*)

THE RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF PSYCHICAL STUDIES

By Robert Crookall, D.Sc., Ph.D.

The address delivered by the Rev. John Crowlesmith at the C.F.P.S. Conference at the Vicarage, Long Melford, Suffolk, on July 17th, 1958, which was published in typescript along with the lectures given at the C.F.P.S. Annual Conference, September 15-17th, 1958, raises matters that are of the first importance to all members of the Fellowship. I venture to offer answers to the questions posed, though well aware that laymen often rush in boldly where theologians fear to tread.

First, I consider that all thinking Christians will agree that psychical phenomena are definitely not " the basis of religion ". They do help many of us towards an intelligent approach to religion. We worship God not only as Love, and as Beauty, but also as Truth. On the one hand, no man who wishes to be " holy " (integrated) can neglect any aspect of religion. On the other hand, we must seek the Kingdom of God first and foremost.

Secondly, the contention that the possession of psychical faculties is of little, if indeed any, value or significance (from the point of view of religion) " unless it is accompanied by moral and religious qualities " is also agreed by all Christians. Psychical abilities, like intellectual abilities, may be valuable aids in our search for God and in the service of our fellows. But, as St. Paul pointed out, they can both be a hindrance if exercised in the absence of " charity ". Many Spiritualists have equated the psychical to the spiritual. They would not have done so if, as in certain early religious Schools, the psychical faculties had been developed within a religious framework.

Thirdly, Christians will undoubtedly be unanimous in holding that healing by means of " spirits ", i.e., by discarnate souls, differs essentially from the Spiritual Healing that was exercised so often and so effectively by our Lord. It does not, of course, follow that spirit-healing may not be called for and may not be effective where orthodox medical treatments have failed: our prayers *to God*, including those for healing, may or may not, be *answered by way of " ministering angels "*.

Fourthly, it is the fact that " much " psychic writing refers to God only " in a casual and distant manner ", that " it is in touch with the spirits but not primarily in touch with the Living God ", that, on the one hand, it tends to ignore sin, evil, penitence, Godly fear and the Atonement, and, on the other hand, tends to relate " salvation " (i.e., " holiness ", wholeness, perfection, with release from the power of sin) to *knowledge*, rather than to *grace, faith and love*. The Fellowship, I suggest, realises that there is good reason for these manifestly false attitudes: " much " of the psychic communications that are received come from *relatively low " levels "* in the " next world ", i.e., from discarnate souls who have newly " passed over " or who, having died long ago, have failed to advance. Relatively unadvanced souls find it easy to attune themselves to sensitive mortals—they therefore " come through " much more easily and much more often than advanced souls (between whom and mortals there is " a *great* gulf fixed "). Now these facile communicators have little, if any, more wisdom than ordinary folk on earth: " The dead know not anything! " declared the Preacher; " They have no brains! " commented Joad. It is a mistake to regard the average communicator as the soul of honour and the fountain of wisdom. Death causes no mental, moral or spiritual change—it merely means that we are minus the physical body.

As G. N. M. Tyrrell, a former President of the S.P.R., pointed out (*Grades of Significance*, Rider), an entirely different situation obtains with advanced souls in the hereafter: he insisted that *the communications which reach us from relatively high " levels " of the " next world " are " wholly and unequivocally Christian "*. Examples of such " messages " are to found in " The Deeper Issues Series " published by J. M. Watkins (*Christ in You, The Coming Light*, etc.); *The Silent Voice* (G. Bell, 1935), etc.

Fifthly, Mr. Crowlesmith states: " The idea that the soul of man is naturally immortal is not Christian. It is Platonic, not Biblical ". Yet we note that Dr. W. R. Matthews (*The Hope of Immortality*, Student Christian Movement, 1936, p. 54), said: " The Church has taught that the human soul is by nature immortal, but it has also taught that eternal life is the gift of God and comes by grace ". He proceeded to reconcile these two views. Many differences of this kind are apparent rather than real: they depend upon the definition of the terms employed.

Sixthly, Christians agree that " religion does not depend upon proof of survival ". It depends upon experience of God and His Son. Nevertheless, those who lack faith and experience may encounter circumstances in which specific evidence for survival is helpful. We have no warrant to legislate for everybody.

Secretary's Causerie—*continued*

be available for groups in the new year. In the meantime a draft is being sent to Group Leaders for their comments and suggestions.

And now . . . A very Happy Christmas to you all. May God bless you throughout 1960, and lead you to new experiences of Himself.

Seventhly, "knowledge" may be a factor in "salvation", subsidiary to grace, faith and love. This is not the *intellectual knowledge* which is worshipped by the modern world, but *inspiration, intuition and insight*, "*the Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*". Christians, unlike many Spiritualists, draw a clear distinction between knowledge of psychic facts (and the exercise of psychical abilities) and the inspiration of Spiritual Truths (and the consequent fulfilment of the second greatest Commandment—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"). Psychic facts are most interesting and valuable: nevertheless St. Paul showed "a more excellent way", the Way in which Love is the central activity. The Scriptures are replete with Spiritual Truths—"The Kingdom of God is *within* you"; "He that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live"; "God is love"; "I am come that they might have *life*, and that more abundantly"; "It is better to *give* than to receive"; "Unless a corn of wheat fall to the ground and die, it bringeth forth no fruit. . . ."; "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no man cometh to the Father save by Me", etc., etc.

Psychic facts (and intellectual truths) have no necessary expression in service to God and man: Spiritual Truths are in an entirely different category; they express the true nature of man and his true relationship to God.

Although psychism is not religion, it is, so to speak, a half-way house between materialism and religion. Many materialistic souls who desparingly cry, "How can these things be?" are helped towards Spiritual Truths via psychical facts. If, for instance, *a* "*spirit*" can and does know our "inmost thoughts", investigators can credit the statement (I Chron., xxvii, 9), "*The Lord* understandeth the thought"; if, by telepathy, clairvoyance, etc., psychics prove to the enquirer that the soul of man is independent of space, he can understand something of the omnipresence of *God* (Ps. cxxxix, 7, etc.); if, by the same means, psychics demonstrates that man can transcend time, the enquirer can realise something of the meaning of the profound words "Before Abraham was, I AM!", if investigators find that some portion of the total man is creative (in the production of "materialisations"), they glimpse something of the significance of the words "*God* created man in his own image".

The C.F.P.S. owes a deep debt to Mr. Crowlesmith for drawing its attention to so many matters of the first importance to its healthy development. "Unless *the Lord* build a house, they labour in vain that build it".

THE IMPACT OF THOUGHT ON MATTER

(*Summary of the De La Warr lecture at Caxton Hall*)

"THROUGHOUT many civilisations the ability of man to affect the growth of crops and the health of animals and human beings by other than material means has been established. Sagas and songs testify adequately to this ability, as do the biographies of saints. The Churches still observe the Rogation Day ritual. With the growth of physical science in the Victorian era, however, much of this earlier work was neglected and regarded as mere superstition, but there is no doubt that these paranormal qualities are possessed by individuals as much today as at any time in history.

As these practices are so universal we decided that there might be some distant connection between them and the work of the Radionic practitioner who can without doubt improve the health of animals and certain human beings and increase the growth of crops. We decided, therefore, to conduct experiments outside the field of organised religion and medicine to see whether or not it was possible for a human being of normal ability to obtain repeatable results in affecting living objects and some extremely interesting evidence has been obtained. We have, in fact, seen fit to call this work a study of the pre-physical state of matter. After eighteen years research into this subject three principles at least stand out clearly from the wealth of information we have obtained.

Principle No. 1. That it is possible for a person to detect a change in certain simple apparatus when that person changes his thought.

Principle No. 2. That by a process of selective thinking it is possible to detect vibratory movements of all kinds whether they are simple frequencies or complex as in nature.

Principle No. 3. That cell growth can be stimulated or stultified by the thought processes.

These are facts and we must accept their existence. They are, of course, only pointers to a new meaning to life but it is high time that they were recognised and developed.

Establishing Resonance

I am going to use this term *thought resonance* quite frequently because when thought resonance is established with a mortal body there is in fact a physiological effect both in the thinker and in the mortal body. This is where a simple piece of apparatus comes in to detect the physiological effect and Principle No. 1 is observed in action.

"That it is possible for a person to detect a change in certain simple apparatus when that person changes his thought."

Dial Settings or Rates

There are appropriate dial settings for every thought covering diseases, anatomical cell groups and systems, hormones, minerals and elements. We have prepared over 4,000 of these rates.

By way of proving that thoughtforms exist I am showing you how they can affect a photographic emulsion. In 1926 a Japanese Professor Fukurai carried out 22 successful experiments under controlled conditions and was able to get a person to read a symbol and transfer it to a photographic plate. This plate was locked all the time in a sealed casket held by a committee. The person simply gazed at the piece of paper containing the symbol and after several minutes was able to say that the symbol had been transferred to the plate in the casket.

In 1935 a group of experimenters transferred thirteen thought images to a photographic paper under test conditions. The sheets of paper were placed one above another in a box and specific thoughts were chosen by the people present.

It is my contention that if a thoughtform can be made to affect a photographic emulsion then there is an energy in thought that justifies our claims.

We now come to photographs that are taken on our special Mark I Camera but they are no longer only a thoughtwave. There is now a stabilising factor from the Camera due to the use of a sound wave and a two bar magnet. We have taken over 12,000 of these photographs and they are mostly repeatable. It is possible to obtain photographs of a kind without using the Camera but clearer definition is obtained by using the Camera and repetition is simple.

A representative soil sample was taken of 17 acres of the field in Scotland 400 miles north and was treated twice a day from our Laboratories in Oxford throughout the growing season. Samples 1 to 5 were taken from the untreated control area of 5 acres. The remaining 17 samples were taken at random by the Scottish farmer from the 17 acres that were treated. These showed a 20 per cent increase of crop and a much improved appearance."

Mr. de la Warr showed some interesting lantern slides which corroborated his statements and from which we saw very plainly the difference between those crops which had been ' blest ' and those that had not.

He also showed a photograph of a test tube of water over which a priest from London had performed a fifteen minute Service according to the Sarum Rite during which the priest had visualised the symbol of a crucifix; and when the photographic plate was developed the cross was distinctly seen on the glass of water. It must be realised, Mr. de la Warr said, that this energy pattern remained on the water for some time and was not the transient thought. It would take approximately twenty minutes to perform the Rite and take the photograph. Later it gradually fades.

Conclusions

There is little to add in conclusion except to say that although we are able to repeat these phenomena, with all humility, of course, we have no idea how they occur. The results of our experiments on plants and soils are facts and they can be repeated in varying degrees by others. The implications are tremendous, and when our work is taken seriously by the scientist, I submit that he must inevitably review his whole concept of what constitutes matter. With the right thoughts and temperament it is possible for a person to evoke and direct this Divine Energy. Where then is the provision for this Energy in the equations of the scientist? How can he apply his law for the conservation of energy, if the power of mind is not included? Why should the physicist admit the presence of a Divine Source of life on Sundays and deny it on week days in his laboratory?

We wish all our readers health and happiness at Christmas and throughout the New Year

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

October 14th, 1959.

SIR,—Regarding the September C.F.P.S *Quarterly Review's* article " Alpine Notes ", I was reminded of Laurens Van Der Post's book *The Lost World of the Kalahari*, published in 1958.

I found a very striking similarity between Dr. Hadfield's experience in the Swiss Alps, and Colonel Van Der Post's experience in seeking out the African Bushmen. In his case his modern and expensive photographic equipment was damaged in a mountain holy place, because he did not pay proper respect to the mountain spirits, worshipped by these Bushmen, and obey their instructions to the letter! It is very interesting indeed.

The chapter I describe is headed: " The Spirits of the Slippery Hills ".

DOROTHY S. MCGEEHIN.

STUDY GROUPS

THIS has been a quarter of unusual activity in our various Study Groups throughout the country, and it is regretted that space does not permit reporting so much of this very worth-while work. The following are very abbreviated reports from some of the Groups:

Liverpool and Merseyside. Among the many interesting meetings was one of practical value in October, when the Group met in Church House to experiment in exercises in thought transference. The monthly Services of Prayer and Meditation for the Sick continue at St. Luke's Church. At a recent service conducted by our member, Mr. A. Massey, the address was given by the Rev. R. B. Whitfield who spoke about healing by prayer and the laying on of hands, and stressed the importance of teaching the patient about the power of God to replace evil conditions by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Cheltenham. Major-General Pakenham-Walsh, leader of the Cheltenham Group, is moving nearer to London, and is therefore having to relinquish his association with that Group, which will continue under the able secretaryship of Mrs. I. Ratsey. The General now hopes to be able to take a more active interest in the London meetings.

The new leader is Major R. H. Nesham.

Torbay. A very striking address was given to this Group at the Union Street Methodist Church Hall, Torquay, by Mrs. Ena Twigg, the well-known " sensitive ", who afterwards answered a wide variety of questions in a most informative and helpful way. The chair was taken by the Rev. Edward King, who also gave the vote of thanks.

Dr. Griffith Evans, F.R.C.S., is to give a series of public lectures to the Group on November 28th, and January 2nd and 30th at 8 p.m. each evening, in the Victoria Hotel, Torquay. On February 17th, Mr. John Benians, principal of a Rudolph Steiner School, will be the speaker.

Exeter. At a Christmas Tea Party to be given by the Group on Saturday 19th December at 2.30 p.m., a tape recording of the remarkable talk given by Major Tudor Pole will be heard. As we go to Press, a talk on Spiritual Healing by Mr. Eric Harrison is being given (November 28th).

A series of six talks on " Psychic Influence on Human Life " is being given to the private study group by Miss Iris V. Yeoman once a month from November to April.

Leeds. The long-term research work of this Group under the Rev. Dr. Macdonald comprises the co-ordination of the findings of several separate study groups, covering healing, psychical subjects, and philosophy.

(*continued foot of next column*)

BOOK REVIEWS

WHY I STARTED PSYCHIC STUDY

This is a four page pamphlet which one of our members has most generously given to the Fellowship for general distribution free of charge. We recommend it for enquirers and for the bereaved and if members will kindly send a stamped addressed envelope (2d.) to the Worthing office copies will be sent.

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS ON SALE

The Bible as Psychic History. Rev. G. M. Elliott (15/9d.).

The Road to Immortality. Geraldine Cummins (13/2d.).

Our Undying Self. Rev. F. W. Moyle (11/-).

Hero, and Other Stories (a most attractive book on animal survival) (5/6d.).

Towards the Hereafter. R. M. Lester (13/2d.).

Beyond Life's Sunset. Rev. Drayton Thomas (4/5d.)

The Gulf between the Church and our People. Sir Cyril Atkinson (8d.).

The Religious Significance of Psychic Studies. The Rev. John Crowlesmith (8d.).

Sensitives, their place, Past and Present. The Rev. F. S. W. Simpson (8d.).

1958 Conference Lectures—reduced price, 2/6d.

TO OUR OVERSEAS MEMBERS

We mentioned in our September *Quarterly Review* that at the present rate of exchange $1.50 would cover our minimum subscription of 10/6; but we find on enquiry at the bank that this is not quite enough. $1.75 covers the amount and leaves a small surplus.

Study Groups—*continued*

Isle of Wight. On October 27th at the invitation of the C.E.M.S., the Rev. Bertram Woods addressed, in the Church Room, a public meeting arranged by the Society. For an isolated village the meeting was well attended and the audience included members of the Island C.F.P.S. Group. After the Vicar opened with prayer, Mr. Woods spoke upon the subject " Do Miracles Happen To-day? " Defining the term " miracle ", he gave examples of phenomena which years ago would have been considered miracles and then introduced and discussed psychic phenomena, giving amongst others biblical illustrations. This led him to the purposes and aims of the C.F.P.S. A period for questions closed the meeting which had proved so interesting, informative and thought provoking.

THE BARBANELL DEBATE

BELOW are some Press extracts from what was described by some papers as " a great debate ", when Col. Lester met Mr. Maurice Barbanell in the open debate at Conway Hall, London. It originated in the attacks made upon Col. Lester by a section of the Spiritualist movement for his statement in *Church Illustrated*, which was to the effect that " so many people should not have to go outside their own churches to find out the truth about life after death, and run the risk of contacting the wrong sources in their search of knowledge ", and that all those in deep distress from bereavement might be guided into the right line of study " through a wholly Christian approach ".

Lester opened the debate, which was under the chairmanship of Mr. Hector Hawton, editor of *The Humanist*, by saying that he stood by every word he had written, and he would go on saying it on every possible occasion. He then gave his own brief answer to the question posed by the debate: " What are right and wrong sources for proving survival? " Lester said:

" The right sources are, firstly, through the Christian churches, and secondly, through sincere and gifted ' sensitives ', and I look forward to the day when those two sources will be complementary. The wrong sources are firstly, through fraudulent mediums, and secondly, through a purely materialistic approach and a complete lack of any desire for spiritual development or progress."

Lester said he found it very surprising that he should be attacked on that statement, for can it be denied that fraud is prevalent in the Spiritualist movement? Is it not a subject that easily lends itself to fraud by those who exploit the gullible and bereaved? How could Barbanell argue against warning people of the risks of contacting the wrong sources?

" Does Spiritualism, as a movement, ever warn newcomers against the dangers of rushing to the first source where they might derive comfort? " Lester demanded. " I've never come across anyone who has been so warned.

" There is also an even more serious side. We must all have met cases where a person suffering under sudden and grievous bereavement has got into the hands of fraudulent mediums who are clever enough to produce sensational phenomena. They are tremendously uplifted till suddenly they find the whole thing has been a fraud. With some people the shock is so great as to tempt them to take their own lives. Over the past few years I have had letters from more than 2,000 bereaved persons asking me for help and advice, and among them eight letters from persons proposing suicide after disillusionment. The letters I treasure most are those same eight persons writing at a later date saying the help and advice I had been able to give them had saved them from taking such a drastic step. But the point is that not one of those people had been able to get any advice from those who had brought them into the séance rooms. Had their own clergy been among our C.F.P.S. members, having our knowledge about the future life, they could have gone to them for advice and comfort and they would never have been brought to the brink of such a step."

Lester contended that a newcomer rarely gets any individual guidance from organised Spiritualist bodies. If they have sittings, they are given no explanation or advice afterwards for the various reasons why such sittings may have been abortive. He said he felt very strongly about the low level of many public demonstrations of clairvoyance, and he could count on the fingers of one hand those which had offered evidential value of any kind whatever. The gullibility of what he termed the " regular message hunters " was pathetic. A first class demonstration with real evidence can be fine propaganda; poor demonstrations are the worst possible propaganda, and we had to face the fact that most of them came into the second category. Surely that was the wrong source!

Lester then quoted the words of Will Ford at a recent Conference: " In place of real evidence of communion we are given a vague drivel of stuff and nonsense. Groans and moans, shivers and shakes, stuttering and spluttering, fads and fancies cannot give us pure knowledge, or true mediumship. We must be realistic, and we need to feel conscious of a sense of holy dedication ".

" We need some plain speaking," said Lester, " about the direction in which Spiritualism is drifting today. Why doesn't it get back to the more scientific and worthwhile study of Oliver Lodge, William Crooks and William Barrett? Then we might have no question about a large section of the movement being the wrong source for producing evidence for survival."

This brought the debate to the crux of the argument, showing that there was a difference of opinion that could never be bridged. Lester asserted strongly that Spiritualism was making its greatest mistake in trying to set itself up as a religion. It deals with facts in nature, *not* in religion. So long as it claims to be a religion, it will never hold any grip on the general public. " You are fast driving away the common man, the ordinary people ", said Lester, " by sticking to that policy—the people who form the life-blood of any great movement ".

Lester then read out some of the viciously worded attacks that had been made on the Churches' Fellowship—and on the clergy generally—by certain Spiritualists. " Doesn't that sort of thing make a mockery of one of your Seven Principles

of Spiritualism?" he asked, "the Brotherhood of Man. Can you think of such behaviour as anything less like brotherhood? It is doing more than anything else to set back the day when we succeed in bringing the truth and rightness of our cause before the people".

Lester asserted that this was not an isolated case of intolerance; he had found an appalling amount of intolerance in the Spiritualist movement, just as he had also found a wonderful amount of Christian charity. Not only intolerance against those who hold Christian beliefs, but intolerance and petty jealousy against their own colleagues. "That is one thing," claimed Lester, "that we have not got in our Churches' Fellowship, and that is because we are founded on the true spirit of fellowship and the practical application of the real brotherhood of man".

Barbanell then came in with his defence of Spiritualism, and posed the question as to what the term "Christian" really meant. It has never been properly defined. He quoted the Rev. Pearce-Higgin's phrase, "the mainstream of Christian tradition" as applied to members of the Churches' Fellowship, and thought such a phrase was ominous.

He asked if Jesus would qualify for membership on Pearce-Higgin's definition. He then proceeded to question if the archbishops and bishops could be trusted with psychic truths. "Whenever the Church holds sway," he declared, "ignorance is rife, truth is suppressed and there is no freedom. Look at Spain and Eire. I believe we must get rid of orthodoxy's creeds and dogmas before we can have the full flow of Divine revelation. If that's anti-Christian, then I'm anti-Christian. I regard all orthodoxy as a curse."

Lester then came back to the attack. Spiritualism, he averred, could only make progress through organised Christianity, because that is the main religion of this country. For years it has made no headway, because it had been attacking the orthodox churches instead of trying to win them over. "Spiritualism", he said, "makes another great mistake in stressing the bare fact of survival rather than the quality of what survives".

(*continued on back page*)

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Barbanell Debate—*continued*

Barbanell, replying to some heckling from the hall about fraud in the movement, said it had been wildly exaggerated, and that there was no greater percentage of fraud in Spiritualism than in any other trade or profession. Lester replied to this by saying that where a doctor or lawyer stooped to fraud he could be debarred from further practice, but a fraudulent medium could still carry on his nefarious work.

Barbanell then made objection to Lester's statement that Spiritualism had made no headway, and said that there was more about the subject in the newspapers today than there had ever been.

"Yes," Lester agreed, "but *what* publicity! Most of it bad, highlighting only the sensational."

"I don't care what sort of publicity we get," Barbanell declared "so long as it's publicity," a declaration which seemed to shock many of the audience, and with which Lester vigorously dissented.

The debate ended, after nearly two hours, on a friendly note. The chairman, summing up, said there had been some hard hitting, and at times he thought some sparks were flying, but it had been a good tempered debate, and the two contestants left the platform, as friendly as ever. But the vital issue that divided them was clear, as to whether Spiritualism should be considered as a religion, and on that there was no possibility of agreement.

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